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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2418

June 23, 1989



WIBW'S FARM BROADCASTERS -- A tour that WIBW (Topeka, Kans.) gave USDA's Brenda Curtis included the station's satellite dishes. From left to right: Paul Pippert, Brenda Curtis, NAFB President Mark Vail, Cathy Patton and Kelly Lenz. USDA Radio & TV Reporters Curtis and Lynn Wyvill spent the second week of June in central Kansas interviewing farmers, research scientists and extension specialists about the winter wheat crop and research projects in Kansas.

ONCE A DAY FEEDING for cattle? Scientists at Kansas State University are feeding cattle 10 to 14 pounds of grain once a day to see if this different technique can keep cows healthy during drought conditions when there's no hay. "It's an odd way to feed cows," says John Brethour, beef cattle scientist & project leader at the Fort Hays Branch Experiment Station. "You go out with the ration once a day and the cow eats it in about 15 to 20 minutes then they have to stand around and wait for the next day. Surprisingly enough, after a week of this they become reasonably content." Brethour says the system is not competitive with pasture if pasture is available. "But," he says, "It's certainly an attractive way to hold the herd together until better times arrive." Contact: John Brethour (913) 625-3425.





KKSU VISIT -- During the trip to Kansas, USDA Radio Producer Brenda Curtis also visited Kansas State University's radio station KKSU, Manhattan, Kans. Standing, KKSU ag reporter Eric Atkinson and Brenda Curtis. Seated: KKSU radio specialist Susan Mercer. Atkinson coordinated many of the interviews for Curtis and Lynn Wyvill.

"YUPPIE RATS" have arrived in West Coast well-to-do neighborhoods, the Washington Post reported recently. The Yuppie rats, who don't eat garbage like their larger, more aggressive Norway rat cousins, are a breed known as "roof rat," that eat fruits, nuts and snails. As the vegetation in subdivisions matures, conditions become ripe for roof rats, who use a network of ivy vines, telephone wires and tree branches to become upwardly mobile. These rats have been around for hundreds of years, but started becoming a problem after World War II. Suburbs built since then have matured, and lush vegetation that has grown around the houses provides food and shelter for rats. Contact: Harry A. Scott (Alameda Co., Calif., Vector Control) (415) 667-7557.

SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE DIRECTORY -- The "Who's Who" (and how you can contact them) of small-scale agriculture -- from animal health to weed control -- is now available in the "Directory for Small-Scale Agriculture." (The directory is for sale from the Superintendent of Documents, GPO, North Capital Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20402 for \$5.50 each.) The directory will enable users to quickly access nearly 500 key state and federal government experts who can answer questions about small-scale, diversified agriculture. Media copies are available from Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445. For more information on small-scale agriculture, contact: Howard Kerr, Jr. (202) 447-3640.

POW! ZOWIE! IT'S BATMAN! Did ya know there's a scientist in Virginia who's known as ... (MUSIC UP FULL) da da da da da da da (MUSIC UNDER) BATMAN! "Bats are just part of what I do," says Peter Bromley, extension wildlife specialist at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg. But, Bromley says, homeowners who live in areas where mosquitoes are a big problem might use the insect-eating bats to help. How many mosquitoes will a bat eat? Several thousand a night. You can attract bats by building your own Bathouse. Bromley has free plans. To get a set, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: BATHOUSE, Wildlife Dept., Virginia Tech., Blacksburg, Va. 24061. Contact: Peter Bromley (703) 231-5087.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1672 -- The Kansas drought has devastated that state's winter wheat crop. Brenda Curtis visited Kansas and talked with farmers and other experts about the effects of the drought. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

CONSUMER TIME #1154 -- The real "Batman;" a new handbook for small-scale amateur farmers; good wood to avoid defective decks; making money from rural land; developing West Virginia's economy. (Weekly reel of news features)

AGRITAPE #1661 -- USDA News Highlights; reserve loan extension; a tick warning for cattle producers; a new weapon against grasshoppers; high priced hay. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thursday, June 29, ag. prices, world tobacco situation; Friday, June 30, grain stocks, hogs/pigs report, world coffee situation; Wednesday, July 5, horticultural exports, crop/weather update; Tuesday, July 11, crop/weather update; Wednesday, July 12, U.S. crop production, USSR crop outlook, world ag. supply/demand report; Thursday, July 13, U.S. live-stock poultry outlook, world ag. production; world cotton situation, world oilseed situation.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

USDA TV NEWS SERVICE -- (June 22) Sec. Clayton Yuetter on China trade status & clean air debates; Soil Conservationist Bill Fecke on wind erosion; Economist Verner Grise on tobacco report; Economist Ron Gustafson on fed cattle prices & placements; Economist Roger Hexem on ag resources; Economist Greg Gajewski on ag outlook; Economist Ralph Parlett on food prices; FEATURES: Lynn Wyvill reports on drought Kansas winter wheat; Kansas pasture conditions. NEXT WEEK: Pat O'Leary reports on "Watermelon Feast Day."

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D

SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D

MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

LOOKING...good says Joe Jarvis (WCVL, Crawfordsville, Ind.) if rain arrives when corn is tasselling, but right now the wet weather has reduced planting, soybeans are only 50 percent of normal. Wetness is helping insects such as alfalfa weevil and corn borers. Says several days of hot weather are needed.

WHEAT...harvest test cuttings are underway in southwest Missouri says Jim Coyle (KRES, Moberly, Mo.). Some fields have experienced wheat streak mosaic virus. Yields will likely be down. Says the dilemma facing producers is wheat and hay don't need rain; corn and soybeans are still growing.

MAJOR...infestation of grasshoppers has hit western Minnesota says Robin Kinney (Linder Farm Network, Willmar, Minn.) Drought last year and cool wet spring this year were ideal conditions for the pest. Farmers have begun spraying. In northern Minnesota a June frost blackened acres of corn; most beans are OK.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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COTTON...loves the heat but it's wilting the people, says George Gatley (Western AgriRadio Networks, Yuma, Ariz.). Southwestern producers got a break this year because the cotton headed out early causing bollworms to emerge too early to feed on the plants. George says the first day of triple-digit temperatures this Spring prompted a mass migration northward of over-wintering northerners; their R-Vs and trailers creating the only breeze in town.

RADIO...stations declaring an agricultural program format now total 144; down 13 stations in the last five months, according to a recent issue of Broadcasting magazine. Ag format is 19th in the top 20. Fastest grower is religious/gospel, up 11 percent to 1,171 stations. The most popular format? Country -- 2,475 stations -- up 2 percent in the same period.



VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio & Television Division